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Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

USDA Rural Development, to assure implementation of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, assigned Faith-Based and Community Initiative Coordinators for each jurisdiction and at the National Office level. The primary duty of the State FBCI Coordinator is to coordinate and transmit reports, information and data between the jurisdiction and the National Office and the White House. VT/NH RD's FBCI Coordinator also provides assistance in coordinating outreach activities and workshops targeting Faith-based organizations.

WHO IS THE VT/NH USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY INITIATIVE COORDINATOR?

Anita Rios Moore, Special Projects Coordinator, anita.moore@vt.usda.gov or (802)828-6006.

THE FINAL RULE revising USDA regulations to remove barriers to the participation of faith-based or religious organizations in USDA programs was published 7/9/04 (www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/fbci/usdafbci070904.pdf). It outlines opportunities for faith-based organizations to apply for and compete on an equal footing with other eligible organizations to receive financial assistance from USDA.

WHAT IS A FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION? USDA's specific criteria for determining whether an organization is a faith-based organization is whether that organization self-identifies on the USDA Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. However, responses on this form are voluntary.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S FBCI?

USDA Rural Development related documentation and supporting information about the FBCI can be found at www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/fbci or by contacting the FBCI Coordinator.

Please take the time to read the USDA brochure FBCI – Alleviating Hunger and Revitalizing Communities (www.usda.gov/fbci/brochure.pdf)

Other sites of interest on such matters as other federal agencies' FBCI activities and the Do's and Don'ts for faith-based organizations is the White House Office FBCI site, www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/guidance/partnering.html.

HOW DOES THIS INITIATIVE AFFECT THE WAY USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT DOES BUSINESS?

It is business as usual. The only change is the inclusion of the USDA Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants form in grant, direct loan, and guaranteed loan application packages for completion by non-profit applicants. Upon receipt of this form it is forwarded to the FBCI Coordinator. Data gathered from the form is reported back to the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI).

WHAT USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE MOST LIKELY TO CONNECT TO FBCI ORGANIZATIONS?

USDA Rural Development provides a Program Tool-Kit at www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/fbci/fbci_toolkit.html, a one-stop site to obtain information for Rural Development programs under the FBCI, including:

- Self-Help Housing
- Farm Labor Housing
- Multi-Family Housing
- Community Facilities

USDA Rural Development 2005-2010 Strategic Plan's Goal 2, includes the President's Faith-based and community initiative within its strategies for developing community infrastructure. National Office reporting to the White House includes the above programs, plus Technical & Supervisory Assistance Grants and Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grants.

WHO DO I CONTACT ABOUT APPLYING FOR USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCING? See our website at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt/index.html>

Business Programs

Rhonda Shippee
802-828-6031

Housing Programs

Robert McDonald
802-828-6068

Community Programs

William Konrad
603-223-6053

FBCI Coordinator

Anita Rios Moore
802-828-6006

FBCI Alt. Coordinator

Carolyn Lawrence
802-828-6002